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The Ethical Teaching Of Modern Fiction.

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Imaginative literature has been a powerful factor in human progress. Its influence has been felt in every period of life. The child's love for the nursery stories; the youth's devotion to Robinson Crusoe; the young man's love for romance and fiction and the way in which the more mature revel in the masterpieces give us some indication of its place.

If additional proof is needed a roll call of the masterpieces of literature will establish the fact. The Illiad, the Odyssey, the great dramas of Shakspeare and the great novels of Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot and others have a firm hold on the hearts of the reading world.

The story has been the popular method of the great teachers in their instruction. It was the method of the world's Greatest Teacher. His parables contain the essence of his teaching. The few terse sayings that are accredited to him will be preserved by society both for their beauty and their intrinsic value. But His parables will ever stand in the forefront of what he said and taught.

In this plan he was but following the method of the Hebrew prophets. The early prophecies of Amos, Hosea,

Isaiah and Jeremiah are to a large degree passionately told in allegorical form. And through these vivid pictures we are able to see the lamentable condition of the people and feel the anguish of the prophet for his race.

The novel is the outgrowth of the story and the parable. And it has had a remarkable influence. Dickens in England reforming some of the vicious social customs. Hugo in France portraying the social condition and Harriett Beecher Stowe in this country in the time of slavery are names that the world will not forget. And in more recent times it has become the messenger of the social, moral and religious reformer.

In many cases the abuse of the novel has caused it to fall into disrepute in some quarters and this feeling has been intensified by the large amount of trash that is coming from our modern press. There has been and always will be many vicious novels produced that ought not be permitted to go before the public. But this is no reason why the good novel should not be welcomed as one of the great moral factors in the advancement of civilization.

We are to study the ethical teaching of four of our modern novels. Two claims are made for them, that they are representative and that they are from the very best writers of fiction. Others might have been chosen from the same authors and yet these have a peculiar claim because of their strong characteristics.

Our first study will be The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne. He was born in New England at a time when the religious thought was as rough and rugged as the New England coast line and as severe as the New England climate. In a word Hawthorne was reared in Puritan New England a section of country having many of the most excellent ideas of American life but at the time of which he wrote was suffering from the crudities of a new country. He was born at Salem where one of the blackest crimes of American history was committed. This crime was not due to the moral depravity of the New England life but rather to the oppressiveness of the Calvinistic theological atmosphere.

The good writer is the true interpreter of his times. The cruel element in this book then is not the personal reflection of Hawthorne's life.

We only need to read of his almost ideal home life with its note of tenderness to realize that he is not giving us personal experiences. But he portrays the Puritanical conditions in a way that gives genius to his work. We get something of his spirit in the following lines, "There is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase I must be content to call affection. The sentiment is probably assignable to the deep and aged roots which my family has struck into the soil. The attachment which I speak of is the mere sensuous sympathy of dust for dust. Few of my countrymen can know what it is; nor, as frequent transplantation is perhaps better for the stock, need they consider it desirable to know.

But the sentiment has likewise its moral quality. The figure of that first ancestor, invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination as far back as I can remember. It still haunts me and induces a sort of home-feeling with the past, which I scarcely claim in reference to the present phase of the town. I seem to have a stronger claim to a residence here on account of this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked and steeple

crowned progenitor,- who came so early, with his Bible and his sword, and trode the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure, as a man of war and peace. He was a soldier, legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the Church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil. He was likewise a bitter persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate an incident of his hard severity towards a woman of their sect, which will last longer, it is to be feared, than any record of his better deeds, although these were many. His son,too, inherited the persecuting spirit, and made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him. So deep a stain, indeed, that his old dry bones, in the Charter Street burial-ground, must still retain it, if they have not crumbled utterly to dust! "

The plot of the Scarlet Letter is a fascinating one. The scene opens in Boston near the public jail where a scaffold had been erected for the punishment of evil doers.

On this occasion Hester Prynne with her infant

child is brought forth and is publicly condemned by the authorities. In addition to this she was compelled to wear on the bosom of her dress the letter A worked in scarlet.

She is admonished to give the name of the child's father and is promised that the scarlet letter will be removed if she will confess. This she refused to do even when the young and eloquent clergyman at the urgent request of the elder minister Mr. Wilson plead with her to do so.

The outraged public did not know that Hester Prynne was a married woman and that her husband was among the populace. As she stood on the scaffold gazing into the faces of her accusers she met the eyes of one whom she recognized as her husband.

She had preceded him to the new country. She had fallen in the hour of temptation. He did not seem to have been much moved by the public condemnation of his wife, but signaled her to be silent. When she had been led away to prison he followed and made her swear secrecy as to his identity . He questioned her as to her partner in sin but she refused him the name and Roger Chillingsworth vowed to her that he would

discover the guilty soul.

Thus we are introduced to Chillingworth who was a sort of physician and he soon found a way into the hearts of the people. He became the warm friend of Arthur Dimmesdale the pretentious minister and they lived together in the same house and for a time became mutually helpful.

It is seen that the minister begins to fail in health. He is pale and emaciated, nervous, and as restless as the hunted deer. Chillingworth becomes his physician and begins to delve into the depths of his soul. Years fly quickly by; the child Pearl grows fast. Hester Prynne has turned her life to the service of the world and is loved for her noble deeds but she still wears her scarlet thread as the emblem of her shame.

The day of reckoning comes. Arthur Dimmesdale goes with Hester to the scaffold and announces that he is the guilty man, that all these years he has suffered hell itself and must open his heart to the world and then suddenly sinks down and dies.

Hester Prynne and Pearl go away to some distant land the former to return and spend her last days in lone-

liness. And Chillingworth lives and dies as he lived feeding on the rotten element which exists in every human soul.

One cannot read this story without feeling what the prophets taught and what needs to be reinforced in this day, the sinfulness of sin. Let us look at the three characters as they come under its dominion.

In a general way it may be said that this book does not deal with sin as if it were some condition that might be easily removed but is represented as a terrible reality and deeply seated in human life.

We note its influence in the life of Chillingworth. He is represented as a cold blooded piece of humanity, but having some splendid traits with high ambitions and quite capable of being successful in the world, and his immediate recognition in Boston by the very best people only emphasises it.

In the first place we see the subtle temptation that unmanned him. His wife had fallen from her exalted position, but there is no reason here why he should shut her out of his life in the manner in which he did. He at once is tempted to deceive the world as his wife has deceived him.

But coupled with this is a vow to find the polluted soul that had brought about ruin and disaster

We have the terrible temptation of a man with splendid possibilities before him turning away from the quest of these to the search for evil in the hidden recesses of a soul. How secretive he becomes! How prying he is! He is but a refuse seeker. He feeds his soul on the dung of humanity. He had been "a pure and upright man," but he had fallen from this high throne. He had had an expression "Calm, meditative, scholarlike", now there was something ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight, the oftener they looked upon him. According to the vulgar idea, the fire in his laboratory had been brought from the lower regions, and was fed with infernal fuel; and so, as might be expected, his visage was getting sooty with the smoke."

"He had begun an investigation, as he imagined, with the severe and equal integrity of a judge, desirous only of truth, even as if the question involved no more than the air drawn lines and figures of a geometrical problem, instead of human passions,

and wrongs inflicted on himself. But, as he proceeded, a terrible fascination, a kind of fierce, though still calm, necessity seized the old man within its gripe, and never set him free again, until he had done all its bidding. He now dug into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold: or, rather like a sexton delving into a grave, possibly in quest of a jewel that had been buried on the dead man's bosom, but likely to find nothing save mortality and corruption. Alas, for his own soul, if these were what he sought!"

He is the type of man that goes out into the world in search of the filth; breathing nothing but polluted air and trying to imagine it pure; seeking revenge and satisfaction only to throttle every good and noble purpose. It is this that turns a man into a demon of the type of Chillingworth.

When we remember the Puritanic belief in a bodily devil we must conclude that Chillingworth fully represents this conception.

The public soon considered him an enemy to the minister rather than a friend and ~~the~~ little Pearl shrank from him on every occasion as if he were a

viper and Hester Prynne herself finally aroused as to his terrible influence over this victim determined to save the minister from his impending doom.

We are introduced to him as a man with fine possibilities. He dies as the devil incarnate.

The next important character for us to notice is Hester Prynne. Temptation came to her in a different way, but it was just as effective, for her sin and disgrace was known to all of New England.

In the story there is no reference to any other sin of which she is guilty. From the hour of her condemnation she seems to have gone forth to in some degree retrieve her lost position. Her life is spent in doing good. She is a friend that is worthy of the name. She bears her suffering and shame alone. Never is there the least intimation that she even thinks of revealing the name of her partner in sin. And she is true to her pledge to Chillingworth. And when Dimmesdale was being throttled by his own conscience it was Hester Prynne who sought him out and warned him of his danger.

Well does Hawthorne say that she was condemned by some who were not her equal and who were unworthy to

be her judges. Let this not be in any sense misunderstood. Hawthorne in no way tries to alleviate her sin. The sombreness and melancholy spirit that pervades the whole story and the merciless way in which Hester Prynne was treated disproves any such imputation. And certainly modern society can not excuse her crime even in an age when there is a movement to do away with such a thing as sin.

But Hawthorne finds his heroine in the quagmire of sin hated, despised, condemned by the world and then he shows that such an individual may rise out of those conditions to become a power of good in the world.

Hawthorne does not present Hester Prynne as fully reclaimed. She could not have obtained a seat among the saints. In the closing period of her life she again succumbed to the same influence that had blighted her life. In her passionate love for the minister she is willing to flee to the ends of the earth if she can but be with him and save him.

But Hawthorne does portray the heroic spirit in Hester Prynne. Two conditions in human affairs are most dangerous and usually disastrous. One is where the individual loses the respect of his fellow men.

And the other and close akin, but still lower and more dangerous is that condition where the individual loses self respect. Hester Prynne had lost the first and as she returned to her cell openly dondemned by the very man who had brought her to ruin it seems only a miracle that she did not lose total regard for herself.

But she did not. If the temptation came to her to throw herself away she did not yield to it. She clung to the womanly traits that remained and went out to face the cruel world and her shame. She became the living illustration "of woman's frailty and sinful passion. Thus the young would be taught to look at her with the scarlet letter flaming on her breast- at her who had once been innocent- as the figure, the body, the reality of sin. And over her grave, the infamy that she must carry thither would be her only monument."

Many a less heroic spirit would have fled. She did not. But finding a quiet secluded spot in the edge of the forest she began to face the problem of life and because of her skill and versatility she soon filled a gap in the community. This woman that was made to

feel by every word, look, and deed that she was banished from society, found time not only to work for herself but she turned to the needs of those about her who were even more miserable than she and tried hard to alleviate their suffering, not unfrequently was the victim of venomous stabs from those she helped, but nothing daunted she restrained the bitterness she felt, "save by a flush of crimson that rose irrepressibly over her pale cheek, and again subsided into the depths of her bosom" and "yet struggled to believe that no fellow mortal was guilty like herself. And in this mood she dared to aid the very persons that heaped abuse upon her and that never let her forget her place in the world."

This heroic spirit is found in intense devotion to Pearl. When she returned to prison the only thing she had in the world was this child. But she was the living memory of her sin and as the child grew she seemed to suggest to some of the patriarchs the idea of witchery and it was decided to take her away from her mother. Every element of her womanhood revolted, "Alone in the world, cast off by it, and with this sole treasure to keep her heart alive,

she felt that she possessed indefeasible rights against the world and was ready to defend them to death."

"God gave me the child" cried she. "She is my happiness! She is my torture, none the less! Pearl keeps me here in life! Pearl punishes me too! Ye shall not take her! I will die first."

And then turning to Arthur Dimmesdale she cried, "Speak thou for me! Thou wast my pastor, and hadst charge of my soul, and knowest me better than these men can. I will not lose the child. Thou knowest what is in my heart, and what are a mother's rights, and how much the stronger they are, when that mother has but her child and the scarlet letter!"

This heroic spirit finds its climax in her determination to attempt to save Dimmesdale from his certain doom. She was among the first in the community to fully comprehend the purpose of Chillingworth. She was one of the first to see the full effect of the influence of his mission. She saw at once the significance for Dimmesdale.

True there may have been some mixed motives in her decision for secretly she loved this man and the

method of escape may be questioned. We may condemn the very suggestion of their flight together, and we may lay the blame or a part of the tragedy at the scaffold on that holiday at her feet. But when Hester Prynne left her home that afternoon to meet Arthur Dimmesdale in his daily walks she had but one desire and that was to save him from the terrible hell in which he was engulfed.

Judging her solely from her motives that drove her into the dense forest on that eventful afternoon, we can but say,"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

We have but one word more as to Hester Prynne, what is to be said of her solution of the way out of this difficulty.

For a moment we almost lose sight of all the good she had done when we see that she only seeks unwittingly to involve them in a deeper sin as she plans for them to flee to some unknown part of the world and begin life anew.

Truly her appeal to him is a noble one as she pictures the impending doom and then portrays a life of freedom in some other part of the world- and for

only one thing as we shall see by her passionate appeal. "But thou shalt leave it all behind thee! It shall not cumber thy steps as thou treadest along the forest path; neither shalt thou freight the ship with it if thou prefer to cross the sea. Leave this wreck and ruin here. Begin all anew! Hast thou exhausted possibility in the failure of this one trial? Not so! The future is yet full of trial and success. There is happiness to be enjoyed! There is good to be done! Exchange this false life of thine for a true one.' Be, if thy spirit summon thee to such a mission, the teacher and apostle of the red man. Preach! Write! Act! Do anything save to lie down and die. Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame. Why shouldst thou tarry so much as one other day in the torments that have so gnawed into thy life? that have made thee feeble to will and to do! that will leave thee powerless even to repent! Up, and away!"

Overcome by this passionate appeal Dimmesdale says "Thou tellest of running a race to a man whose knees are tottering beneath him! I must die here! There is

not the strength of courage left me to venture into the wide, strange, difficult world, alone!"

"Thou shalt not go alone! " Answered she in a deep whisper. Then, all was spoken!

Hawthorne has given us the only possible explanation of her actions and has done it so effectively that we again quote his words,"Hester Prynne had wandered without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness as vast, as intricate and shadowy as the untamed forest, amid the gloom of which they were now holding a colloquy that was to decide their fate. Her intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely as the wild Indian in his woods. For years past she had looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established. Criticising all with hardly more reverence than the Indian would feel for the clerical band, the judicial, the pillory, the gallows, the fireside, or the church. The tendency of her fate and fortunes had been to set her free. The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers,-

stern and wild ones,- and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss.

With every institution of society dealing out nothing but the sternest justice, tempered with no mercy she was prepared by the "seven years of outlaw and ignominy for this very hour."

And she sought only freedom for Arthur Dimmesdale and herself. She like the wild deer of the forest that hunted, chased and pursued by the enemy only seeks some means of escape by which it will be free from its pursuers.

It is not surprising then that she does not hold as sacred the laws of the state and church when she had been driven into the moral wilderness by their meridless cruelty.

The most powerful teachings of this book are against the sham, pretence and hypocrisy of the world. Hawthorne finds it everywhere and assails it with remarkable power. But he does it the most effectively through the life and character of Arthur Dimmesdale, the minister.

We must not understand Hawthorne as attacking any-one class, for he shows the effect of pretence in every character. Chillingworth pretends to be an ardent friend of the minister when in fact he is his most deadly foe. He assumes to be a respectable Christian physician when in fact he is the scavenger of hell itself. He poses as a good Samaritan, he lives a Judas Iscariot.

Hawthorne points it out in society of which the church was a dominant factor and Hester Prynne is the victim. In the opening scene one of the members of the parish is speaking. We only need to remember that the Christian spirit should dominate society and the church and to contrast the true Christian spirit with this speech when she says "It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church members in good repute should have the handling

of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne." "These magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen but merciful overmuch- they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead." "This woman has brought shame upon us all and ought to die."

And let us look at these"God-fearing gentlemen" They are seated on the platform , the Governor and his associates in office, filled with the importance of the "sacredness of Divine institutions". They were doubtless, good men, just and sage. But out of the whole human family, it would not have been easy to select the same number of wise and virtuous persons who should be less capable of sitting in judgment on an erring woman's heart and disentangling its mesh of good and evil, than the sages of rigid aspect towards whom Hester Prynne now turned her face."

Then a minister arose who "looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volumes of sermons and had no more right than one of those portraits would have to step forth, as he now did, and meddle with a question of human guilt, passion and anguish," and instructed Arthur Dimmesdale to have Hester Prynne confess the name of the

guilty man. This she refused to do and the elder minister "arose and delivered a discourse on sin with continual references to the ignominious letter."

Hawthorne does not condemn this pretence. He draws the picture effectively and permits us to draw our conclusions. One wonders if it had been possible for him to have in any other way made it as effective.

Arthur Dimmesdale furnishes us the most interesting study of this book. Like Hester Prynne we are not permitted to see how he was tempted. We see only the results. They are enough. We first see him as the elder minister, the Rev. Mr. Wilson, urges him to exhort the woman to confess her partner in sin. The dual tendencies of life had a terrible conflict for possession of a human soul, but the evil tendency prevailed and Arthur Dimmesdale with an "apprehensive a startled, a half frightened look,-" stepped forth and urged her to speak. The seed of deceitfulness which had already been sown in his life again bears fruitage and he had slipped back one step lower toward the certain disaster that awaited him.

The author contrasts the position of the false, pretentious minister and that of Hester Prynne. He

was beloved and honored by the world, revered because of his position and looked upon as the spiritual father of the parish. But the crowd did not understand the severe conflict that raged within his soul for he was no hardened criminal. He was stunned by his own dual nature. The injustice of this scene haunted him and he moved about, spoke and acted as one that was being lashed by an outraged conscience.

Hester Prynne was despised by these godly men and women. There was not a friendly face in all of this New England mob to whom she could turn. Rather would they have torn her to pieces than to have offered her any sign of sympathy and pity.

She saw the contrast of the attitude toward herself and the minister and she must have felt it keenly. Is it not a wonder that she did not openly rebel? But when pressed to confess the unknown name and the promise made that the scarlet letter would be removed if she did, she replied "Never" and then "looking into the deep and troubled eyes of Arthur Dimmesdale" she continued "It is too deeply branded. Ye cannot take it off. And would that I might endure his agony as well as mine!"

"Speak, woman!" said another voice coldly and sternly. "Speak and give your child a father!"
"I will not speak!"replied Hester, "My child must seek a heavenly father, she shall never know an earthly one."

But this was not the end of the cruelty accorded her. Everywhere she went she was the object of scorn. If she went into the streets she was pointed out by the young and the old. Continually,and in a thousand ways, did she feel the innumerable throbs of anguish that had been so cunningly contrived for her by the undying, the ever active sentence of the Puritan Tribunal. Clergymen paused in the streets, to address words of exhortation that brought a crowd, with its mingled grin and frown, around the poor, sinful woman. If she entered the church trusting to have the Sabbath smile of the Universal Father, it was often her mishap to find herself the text of the discourse."

All of this and even more was the service the church rendered her in an hour of need, and all of it was due largely to the sham and pretense of the age and it came from a quarter where it was least expected.

Dramatic and even tragic is the scene, and for the

moment we see only this miserable creature condemned by a heartless mob. But it is only for a moment for again we see the miserable hypocritical crowd and the false pretentious minister unconsciously rebuked by the nobility of her reply to their demands. They represent the sham and hypocrisy of the world found alas in too many phases of society, while she a poor sinful woman revealed an element of womanhood that challenges our highest admiration. He false to himself, to the world and to God, had the applaudits of the pretentious world. She, suffering the bitterest pangs of remorse and anguish, ostracised by a false social world had more of the morally sublime than any of her accusers.

The next glance that we have of Arthur Dimmesdale is when Hester Prynne is summoned before the governor to give reasons why her child should not be taken away from her. And she is only saved from this calamity by the words of entreaty of the young clergyman.

His whole physical being had been influenced by his deceit. He is now pale, careworn and emaciated, and"his large dark eyes had a world of pain in their

troubled and melancholy depth ." And evidently there had been a terrible mental and moral struggle and Dimmesdale had gathered some courage, but it is only the courage of a coward. But he made a most effective plea in behalf of the mother and child. Even old Roger Chillingworth noted the "strange earnestness" with which the minister spoke. But he had not sufficient courage to speak the truth concerning himself.

His failing health was noticed by all his congregation and "every successive Sabbath his cheek was paler and thinner and his voice more tremulous than before, and it became a constant habit for him to press his hand over his heart with first a flush and then a paleness, indicative of pain."

Thus far we have studied Dimmesdale under the mob influence. We do not excuse him when we say that he acted as he did largely because of the demands of society. And to the very close of his life this influence was felt, and strange as it may seem it was never very good. Frequently when alone he determined to throw off his mask and reveal his true self to them. But he did not have the courage.

He would stand before his people and condemn himself avowing that he was not fit to be their pastor and his life was so full of sin that he was not worthy of their affection.

This to some degree soothed his conscience and quieted the demands of his better self. And it aroused the sympathy and love of his people and they were over-awed at the piety of their pastor.

And thus his own words had such a marked influence on the people, and this reacted upon himself in such a way as to put off the noble demand of his whole being.

And it is not surprising that he did not. He clearly foresaw the inevitable result. Hester Prynne was a living example of the treatment of this cold, heartless, Christless Puritanism, and there is no wonder that the heart of Arthur Dimmesdale quailed before this ordeal. And in this it must not be thought that we are discussing the ethics of what he should or should not have done, but rather we are pointing out the influence of the people upon him.

We have noted the determination of old Roger Chillingworth to find the hidden secret which would

reveal the guilty soul to the world, also we have seen that he had a friendly regard for the minister. So subtle was the influence of the physician and so persistent the entreaties of the people that it was agreed that the minister and the physician should live together. And Chillingworth became the medical adviser of the clergyman.

They were frequently seen together taking long walks in the woods, conversing together upon topics of mutual interest and they found in each other an intellectual affinity.

But Roger Chillingworth probed deeper than this. He sought the cause of the minister's illness and with his vow before him he sought to go deep into the patient's bosom, "delving among his principles, and probing everything with a cautious touch like a treasure seeker in a dark cavern."

It is was not long before some members of the parish had opinions of their own about the old physician. He had undergone a remarkable change and "Now there was something ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight." A sort of intuition warned Dimmes-

dale of the old man and yet as he was suspicious of all men he did not fully appreciate his danger. Roger Chillingworth delved deeper and deeper into the heart of Dimmesdale in an effort to find the hidden secret that would reveal the cause of his physical condition. Frequently conversations between them turned to the dangers of secrets hid in the heart and always Chillingworth argued it would be far better for every troubled heart to "lay open the wound or trouble" in their souls especially to his physician.

The minister argued against this and held that every troubled life would gladly give up its secret "to the Physician of the soul." Said he, "He if it stand with his good pleasure, can cure or he can kill. Let him do with me as in his justice and wisdom He shall see good, But who art thou that meddlest in this matter? That darest thrust himself between the sufferer and his God."

This passionate outburst intensified the suspicions of the old physician and he reasoned" as with one passion so with another. He hath done a wild thing ere now, this pious minister Dimmesdale in the hot passion of his heart."

Relations were soon reestablished again after this rupture and due apologies were made by the minister. But Chillingworth kept probing still deeper and deeper into the hidden life of his patient. One day when the minister had fallen asleep in his chair old Roger Chillingworth came stalthily into the room and standing in front of the minister pushed back his vestment and " a wild look of wonder, joy and horror came over him. With what a ghastly rapture, as it were, too mighty to be expressed only by the eye and features, and therefore bursting forth through the whole ugliness of his figure, manifest by the extravagant gestures with which he threw up his arms toward the ceiling, and stamped upon the floor!" Had a man seen old Roger Chillingworth, at that moment of his ecstacy he would have had no need to ask, how Satan comports himself, when a precious soul is lost to heaven, and won him to his kingdom." The old physician had discoverèd the cause of the minister's condition and he knew whose name Hester Prynne would have spoken in the market place had she confessed. And from that day Dimmesdale felt the evil influence of Chillingworth and became more re-

served. But always he felt as if he were haunted by some emissary of Satan.

Any study of Dimmesdale is incomplete without an examination of the man when alone. True we have had glimpses of him but we have not seen the real man.

He was a man of remarkable powers and gifts. He won the hearts of all about him by his personal charm, his intelectual acuteness and his oratorical ability. He sympathized deeply with the people in their sorrows for he carried in his bosom the deepest sorrow imaginable- the sorrow of being a pollution and a lie before the world. There were hours when alone that his whole being rebelled against the false position that he occupied. And he would determine to speak the truth concerning himself. And he did speak.

But it was only to add to his deceit. He would condemn himself in the pulpit in the bitterest terms in an effort to satisfy himself, when he knew that his people would interpret it in an entirely different manner. And thus he learned to despise himself.

In this condition he would go into his secret closet and try every external means that he could devise to punish himself. '"Frequently he scourged his

own shoulders, laughing bitterly at himself: now he would fast until he was so weak that he could hardly stand; sometimes he sat alone through the night inspecting his own life until his brain reeled with the horrors of his life. Now it was a herd of diabolical shapes, that grinned and mocked at the pale minister and beckoned him away with them; now a group of shining angels, who flew upward heavily as sorrow laden, but grew more ethereal as they rose. Now came the dead friends of his youth, and his white bearded father, with a saint-like frown, and his mother turning her face away as she passed by. Ghost of a mother- thinnest phantasy of a mother- methinks she might have yet thrown a pitying glance toward her son. And now through the chamber### glided Hester Prynne leading along little Pearl, in her scarlet garb and pointing her forefinger first at the scarlet letter on her bosom, and then at the clergyman's own breast.

In this terrible hell Dimmesdale existed. It is the hell that every soul experiences to a more or less degree. It is the condition that threatens to get a deep hold upon the commercial, the social, the intellect ual and religious world.

Men who are in the business world, who desire to be and are thought to be the soul of honor. But they lend their influence directly or indirectly to business methods that are corrupt. Their conscience demands a reckoning, and in an effort to ease it they use the same methods as Arthur Dimmesdale and are about as successful. In the social world where too frequently sham and pretense are the chief stock in trade; in the intellectual world where men prefer to have the approval of a certain class rather than be true to themselves, the methods are well known. And in the religious world where above all things else man must be true to himself to his fellowmen and to God, Arthur Dimmesdale's experiences are too numerous. "It is in the unspeakable misery of a life as false as his that it steals the pith and substance out of whatever realities there are around us, and which were meant by Heaven to be the spirits of joy and nutriment. To the untrue man, the whole universe is false- it is impalpable- it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself in so far as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow, or indeed ceases to exist. The only truth that continued to give Arthur Dimmes-

dale a real existenceon this earth was the anguish in his inmost soul. Had he once found power to smile and wear a face of gaiety, there would have been no such man."

This and this alone is the salvation of any man. If he is false to any degree without pain or anguish he is utterly lost. There is hope only to the degree of suffering which the sham causes. The hope is not in the suffering but the fact that the noblest element still lives and rebels against a false life.

The last period in the life of Dimmesdale is dominated by the influence of Hester Prynne. The preliminary scene has a very dramatic setting, the ministers guilty conscience will not let him sleep and at the dead hour of midnight he made his way to the scaffold. Standing upon it he gave a shriek thinking that the populace would hear and come to the scaffold and he would confess all. Soon Hester Prynne with Pearl, who had been to the death bed of Governor Bellingham, came by, the minister called to her. She came up on the scaffold with Pearl who asked him if he would be true and stand with them here on the morrow at noon. This he refused to do.

While standing here Dimmesdale saw two things that caused him great alarm. He saw in the heavens an immense letter- the letter A- marked out in a dull red light, and standing in the dim light of the night the ugly person of old Roger Chillingworth- both forebodings of his doom.

Hester Prynne with a woman's intuition saw the mental state of the minister and she determined to save him, She first sought out the old physician and appealed to him to forgive the past and to no longer hound the clergyman. This he indignantly refused but gave her permission to follow any course and also released her from her vow of secrecy. She at once sought out Arthur Dimmesdale on one of his usual walks in the forest. They seated themselves hid from the world's view and began to discuss the questions nearest their hearts; To Hester's inquiry as to whether or not he had found peace we have a passionate outburst concerning his miserable life. He praises her condition as compared with his own and is relieved for the first time in seven years he is talking with one who knows what he is.

With her passionate love for him she confesses that

she is the wife of Chillingworth and that Chillingworth is his worst enemy. He was so shocked by this revelation that for a moment he was like a madman. And it was only when she threw her arms about him and held him as she would a child that he promised to forgive her.

And now the storm had passed, they sat down together with a certain amount of peace even in this the gloomiest hour of their existence. "So they lingered an instant longer. No goldem light had ever been so precious as the gloom of this dark forest. Here seen only by his eyes the scarlet letter need not burn into the bosom of the fallen woman! Here seen only by her eyes, Arthur Dimmesdale false to God and man, might be for one moment true!" It is the first step toward their reclamation.

But the problem was yet unsolved. How could they save themselves? She makes her plea for him to leave New England and go anywhere that he might"exchange this false life for a true one." If we have thought this minister to be wholly vicious we need only to listen to his reply to convince us that he is not. "I am powerless to go. Wretched and sinful as I am,

I have had no other thought than to drag on my earthly existence in the sphere where Providence has placed me Lost as my own soul is I would still do what I may for other souls".We have seen that Hester planned that they should go away and he consented.And the first ray of hope such as it was flooded their unhappy lives.

On the holiday when all New England was out to see the Governor's procession,Arthur Dimmesdale determined to reveal his secret. He had never spoken so eloquently as on this day in his annual sermon.As the procession came to the scaffold he stepped aside and taking Hester Prynne by the hand he feebly mounted the scaffold.Chillingworths seeing the movement tried to restrain him but he replied,"Ah, tempter Methinks thou art too late" Thy presente power is not what it was.With God's help I shall escape thee now"."Hester Prynne" cried he with a piercing earnestness "In the name of Him who gives me grace to do what**** I withheld myself from doing seven years ago,come now and twine thy strength about me Thy strengthHester butlet it be guided by thy will which God hath grantedme".Climbing the scaffold supported by

Hester, In the face of the tumultuous and wondering crowd he tore his vestment off and revealed to them the scarlet lett er on his own breast and confessed the terrible sin that had sapped his life. And in the arms of the woman who had at last awakened the divine to action he died.

In the three characters we have studied Hawthorne teaches us some never to be forgotten lessons, we do not claim for him a system of theology. He does teach us the sinfulness of sin and its disastrous influence on human life. How emphatic he makes this when he says"the breach which guilt has once made into the human soul is never in this mortal state repaired. It may be watched and guarded, so that the enemy shall not force his way again into the citadel ** but there is still the ruined wall, and near it the stealthy tread of the foe that would win over again this unforgotten triumph. So it ever is** that an evil deed invests itself with the character of doom." Both principles he illustrates in the lives of these three characters.and

Hawthorne teaches that no matter how vile the sin may be the worst sin of all is the pretense, the sham,

the hypocrisy of the world behind which men and women hide. Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale are equally guilty in the beginning, but he became the greater sinner because of his false and pretentious life. While Roger Chillingworth becomes the devil's own.

The closing scene emphasises the fact that no sacrifice is too great to make for us to be true to self. This and this alone brings peace. Arthur Dimmesdale is far nobler in the throes of an ignominious death than in the robes of a false and hypocritical minister.

The Ethical Teaching Of Modern Fiction.

Orlando Lora Sample.

Boston University 1910.

We now come to our final study, Hugo's Les Miserable. The limitations of this paper does not permit an exhaustive study as this work itself would be sufficient for the thesis.

In this work as in the previous one we have a study of social conditions. The individual is none the less a factor but in the mind of Hugo the individual is what he is largely because of society.

Our first study will be the character of Fantine. She was an ordinary young girl in an ordinary world of social life. Society placed about her an abundant opportunity of temptation. But it did not shield her in any way. It raised no helping hand.

In such a condition it is little wonder that she fell. A child was born to her and then life's responsibilities opened to her. How great is the power of motherhood! From the reckless girl of the street she became a mother worthy of the name.

Her devotion to her child Cosette is the one thing that redeems her. She was at once awakened to the material needs of her child and sought an opportunity to make a living. As a working woman she found employment in the factory of Father Madeline. Here she toiled and bestowed all her earnings on her child and was glad that she could.

But society never forgets the misdoings of a woman. And it became known that she had a past. This finally became a protest and then a demand was made that she be driven from the factory.

This was done without the consent or knowledge of Father Madeline. Fantine was thrown out upon the cold, heartless, world by a set of vicious gossips.

She found a place for her child in the home of the Thernadiers who prove to be parasites of society. These people at once saw their opportunity to make large demands on this unfortunate woman.And then worst of all to rob her child of what the mother was paying for.

After Fantine had been driven from the factory she was compelled to go out on the streets to earn a living. She went from place to place seeking employment as a servant girl but she was refused work and was reduced to destitution. She felt something of the world's biting sarcasm and"the cold and bitter s scorn of the passers-by penetrated her very flesh and soul like a north wind".

One day late in the winter she received a letter from the Thernadiers saying Cosette was with-out clothes and was suffering from the cold. Fantine was almost wild with grief. She went into a barber shop and sold her hair for ten francs. Then she purchased a petticoat for Cosette and dreamed that the child would no longer suffer from the cold.

Having sold her hair she began to hate herself and lost all self respect.She sank lower and lower in the human scale. But another trial came. The Thernadiers wrote that Cosette was sick and that Fantine must send Forty francs or that Cosette would

die. Almost driven to insanity by grief she went out on the street and was offered forty francs for her two front teeth, and she again met the sacrifice for the child.

Everything now was gone that Fantine loved. She had nothing left but her soul--and she went out on the street and sold that--to earn money to meet the constant demands of the Thernadiers to keep Cosette. " What is the history of Fantine? It is society purchasing a slave."

One night as Fantine was on the streets a fashionably dressed man put some snow down her back and in a moment they were in a fight. Fantine was arrested and taken before the police and sentenced to six months in prison. Father Madeline had seen the act and as mayor interferred. Fantine hated him so much that she spit in his face. She did not know that he had spoken in her behalf. Javert was determined that she should serve the sentence and Father Madeline was equally determined that she should not and he set her free.

Then for the first time he heard her story and immediately set about to rectify the terrible outrage that had been committed in his name.He promised that her child should be sent for at once.

What raptures Fantine enjoyed as she waited for her child Butdisease had fastened itself upon her frail system and she rapidly grew worse until when Javert came into the room the shock was so great that she died." Jean Valjean rested his

elbow on the knob at the head of the bed, and his brow on his hand, and began to contemplate the motionless body of Fantine, which lay extended there. He remained thus, mute, absorbed, evidently with no further thought of anything connected with life. Upon his face and in his attitude there was nothing but inexpressible pity. After a few moments of this meditation he bent forward towards Fantine, and spoke to her in a low voice.

What did he say to her? What could this man, who was reproved, say to that woman, who was dead? What words were those? No one on earth heard them. Did the dead woman hear them? There are some touching illusions which are, perhaps, sublime realities. The point as to which there exists no doubt is, that Sister Simplice, the sole witness of the incident, often said that at the moment that Jean Valjean whispered in Fantine's ear, she distinctly beheld an ineffable smile dawn on those pale lips, and in those dim eyes, filled with the amazement of the tomb.

Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in both his hands, and arranged it on the pillow as a mother might have done for her child; then he tied the string of her chemise, and smoothed her hair back under her cap. That done he closed her eyes. Fantine's face seemed illuminated at that moment. Death that signifies entrance into the great light.

Fantine's hand was hanging over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt down before that hand and kissed it.''

Thus ended the life of this unfortunate creature of society. Her story is the story of a great multitude of innocent souls that have been blighted by sin. The depths to which she fell is possible to every humen being that becomes cursed with sin. And the only way of redemption is the way in which she was redeemed, in keeping open the fountain of love.

Closely related to the story of Fantine is the career of the Thernadier's. They represent the parasites of society. How inhuman are all their demands for money of this poor wretched woman. And how brutal is their treatment of Cosette.

They are the human vultures which we find in all society. The world has been cursed with their tribe from the beginning. Avarice and greed have been the mainsprings of all their actions and no crime is too great for them to commit if in it they are able to satisfy their inordinate desires.The soul of a woman,the innocence of the child are no more sacred than they would be to cannibals. They represent the depths of infamy to which human beings can sink.And the pity is not only that the individual falls so far beneath what a human being should be but rather that the world must endure such as these.

There is a class of people in the world that have a notion that law is supreme and inviolate.Human life and happiness are nothing--law is everthing. This class insist that law must be strictly observed under any and all circumstances. Hugo

has represente d this class in the character of Javert.

He represents the government and it is his idea that he is divinely appointed guardian of the law. The least infraction of the law from his standpoint demands the severest punishment.He knows no such thing as mercyand justice is in no way to be te mpered with it. The author presents such a striking view of the man that we let him speak:"The human face of Javert consisted of a flat nose ,with two deep nostrils,towards which enormous whiskers ascended on his cheeks. One felt ill at ease when he saw these two forests and these two caverns for the first time. When Javert laughed -- and his laugh was rare and terrible, -his thin lips parted and revealed to view not only his teeth, but his gums,and around his nose there formed a flattened and savage fold,as on the muzzle of a wild beast. Javert,serious,was a watch-dog; when he laughed he was a tiger. As for the rest,he had very little skull and a great deal of jaw. his hair concealed his foreheadand fell over his eyebrows; between his eyes there was a permanent,central frown,like an imprint of wrath;his gaze was obscure; his mouth pursed up and terrible; his air that of ferocious command."

His strict notions of the law he carried out in his relations to Fantine and Jean Valjean. We have seen that on one occasion Fantine was in the street and became engaged in a fight.Javert ,true to his conception of things decided that

F antine was to blame as she belonged to the only class that disdained the law. He immediately arrested her and but for the timely interference of Father Madeline she would have been sent to prison. He had in fact sentenced her to six months in prison and had turned a deaf ear to her heart rending entreaties. She was about to be led away to prison by the soldiers when M.Madeline commanded that Inspector Javert set the woman at liberty." Javert felt that the Mayor was going crazy".He became exasperated at such a command of the mayor and declared that as she had insulted the Mayor she had insulted the law and she must be punished accordingly and no one must interfere.

But the Mayor was obdurate and replied" Inspector Javert the highest law is conscience. I have heard this woman; I know what I am doing". A sharp exchange of words followed and M. Madeline order ed Javert to leave the room. And"Javert receiv -ed the blow erect,full in the face, in his breast,like a Russian soldier. He bowed to the very earth and left the room."

Javert continues this same policy in his relation to Jean Valjean. He is theone who discovers that M. Madeline is now none other than the escaped galley slave,Jean Valjean. That he had reformed and was doing a tremenduous good made no difference to Javert. The Inspector was commissioned by divine authority to enforce the law and that must be done at any

cost. In the after experiences of Jean Valjean he was met at every turn of life by Javert and always the latter was merciless. He is like some law of Fate that seems to follow and dog the footsteps of Jean Valjean wherever he goes. He is as persistent as the tides of the sea. There is no power to divert his ceaseless pursuit of the offender of the law.

Jean Valjean had offended the law. But his offense was not so much because he was lawless but because he was a victim of the infamous social conditions of France. He stole rather than starve. In stealing he broke the civil law but he obeyed the moral law by obeying the higher law of the sacredness of human life. And morally he was justified. But Javert was like some shadow that followed him wherever he went.

And Javert was equally as severe with himself. When as M. Madeline, Jean Valjean was mayor, Javert thought him to be the escaped galley slave. He sent such information to the authorities at Paris. They ridiculed the notion and pointed to the fact that a man had just been arrested and found guilty of being Jean Valjean.

True to his theory of the sacredness of the law he went to the mayor and confessed to what he had done and insisted that M. Madeline at once have him dismissed for disloyalty. This the mayor refused to do.

In the presentation of the character of Javert it is not so much what Hugo says but in the skill in which he presents

this character and the repulsiveness that we feel toward him which makes the teaching all the more emphatic.

The law is to be obeyed when consistent with human life and progress.But laws are not inexorable. Time brings new duties. The law is sacred only as it treats human life sacred. Life is paramount to law andJavert's insane devotion to the law and its rigid enforcement may be carried beyond the bounds of reason and intelligence.

This doctrine may not need the emphasis that it did at the time of Hugo. There is a question of whether we are not lawless in our tendency and have but little regard for the law. And this irreverence for the law has brought upon us the shame and humiliation of our misgoverned cities and the graft that has attended this misrule.We may need to enforce the law more determined ly but we must also ever bear in mind the central truth of Hugo's teaching which he really learned from the Great Teacher that human life is more sacred than the mere technical observance of the law..

The good Bishop and Jean Valjean are the two remaining characters to be considered and are more or less related. The beauty of the one character is not seen until we see it in relation to and in contrast with the other. The Bishop was never greater than in the presence of Jean Valjean because of the contrast and the responsiveness of the Bishop to the life and need s of Jean Valjean .The Bishop represents the

highest ideal of Christian thought and spirit. Jean Valjean represents the possibility of the human being.

Hugo has given us a most e xcellent portrayal of the life and character of the Bishop. The dominating thought with him was his human interest.He lived to serve those about him in every rank and station. There was no spirit of aloofness ,of greed or of avarice.In fact he was free from any selfish interest and sought only the welfare of those about him. In this way he became the means of doing great good.

He sought to aid the poor and needy of his parish. No home was too humble for him to visit and no man too low in the human scale of sin but what he did all he could to redeem him. He was the friend of the lowly and the oppressed. He cried out against the injustices of the downtrodden and dared to fight their battles anywhere.

As he ministered to the needs of the poor so he minister -ed to the rich. He showed them their duty and shamed them out of their avarice and greedy selfishness. He taught them to give and to give largely of their means to relieve the poor. He rebuked the lavish and extravagant expenditures for mere personal pleasure.

And thus he became the friend of the poor who came to him with their sorrows and their sufferings. And the rich came and gave him of their means that he might relieve the distressed condition of the poor.

So well was his work received and so favorably did he impress himself upon the masses that he was generally known as Monseigneur Bienvenu(Welcome).

It would naturally be expected that this man would lead a quiet simple life.When he went to his parish as a Bishop the episcopal residence was large and roomy while the adjoining hospital was small and very much crowded.He insisted that they exchange places that all might be the better taken care of. His habits took the simplest and most natural form and he lived on a par with the people about him.

Having taken this brief review of him we now come to the important event related to our story,his relation to Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean the escaped galley slave and convict wandered from place to place in search of work and of some place to stay. Being required to show his passport which stated that he was an dangerous man he was unable to gain admission to any of the inns. In many places his very presence was all that was needed to cause the inn-keepers to refuse him admission .

This treatment by society caused him to become more like a wild beast than a man for he had been driven from every public and private place where he had tried to obtain lodging

In despair he knocked at the Bishop's door and was told to enter.The man obeyed and the Bishop's sisters were almost

frightened to death. The man told his story in a loud voice. "See here. My name is Jean Valjean. I am a convict from the galleys. I have been walking four days since I left Toulon I have travelled a dozen leagues today on foot . This evening when I arrived in these parts, I went to an inn, and they turned me out,because of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the town hall. No one would take me. I went to the prison ; the jailer would not admit me. I went to the dog's kennel the dog bit me and chased me off, as though he had been a man. I went into the fields intending to sleep in the open air beneath the stars. There were no stars.A good woman pointed out your house to me and said to me,'Knock there'. I have knocked. What is this place? Do you keep an inn? I will pay. I have money. Iam weary ; twelve leagues on foot; I am very hungry. Are you willing that I should remain?"

" The Bishop turned to the man.

" Sit down ,sir,and warm yourself. We are going to sup in a few moments, and your bed will be prepared while you are supping."

The man was so overcome by the kind treatment of the Bishopthat he rattled on in an incoherent manner; and then he was dumbfounded at the kindly demeanor of the Bishpp and expressed his surprise at the attitude of the latter.

The Bishop replied" You could not help telling me who you were. This is not my house ; it is the house of Jesus

Christ. This door does not demand of him who enters whether he has a name, but whether he has a grief. You suffer , you are hungry and thirsty; you are welcome ; do not say that I receive you into my house.No one is at home here , except the man who needs a refuge. I say to you , who are passing by, that you are much more at home here than I am myself. Everything here is yours. What need have I to know your name? Besides before you told me, you had one which I knew." ** "you are called my brother".

That night the Bishop conducted Jean Valjean to a most excellent room in which to sleep. In the middle of the night he awoke. He arose and made his way to the chamber of the Bishop where he stole a basket of silverware and went out into the night.

The next morning three officers returned Jean Valjean and the silverware to the Bishop. The Bishop refused to acknowledge the theft and the thief was released. The gendarmes gone the good Bishop assured Jean Valjean that his room was always ready for him and that he could come and go at leisure . And then giving him two additional candle sticks the Bishop said to him"Do not forget , never forget , that youhave promised to use this money in becoming an honest man."

" Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of ever having promised anything, remained speechless. The Bishop had emphasized the words when he uttered them. He resumed with solemnity:-

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you; I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition,and I give it to God."

The power of the Bishops message will be seen in our study of Jean Valjean. But it must be said here that the whole attitude toward the world in which he found it , culminating in his attitude toward the galley slave, is Hugo's conception of the life of Jesus Christ. And also this must be the attitude of Christianity towards the world. To reveal this selfsame spirit is the mission of his disciples. " Show us the Father and it sufficeth us" is the challenge of the world to The Christian religion . In the Bishop we see the Christian spirit at its nor mal state.He is love incarnate in human flesh.He is what Christianity professes to be.

In our study of Jean Valjean it is necessary for us to see the depths to which he had fallen and the cause of his degredationif we are to appreciate the power of the Bishop's influence upon him.

Jean Valjean was left an orphan at a very early age. He was taken by a sister to raise. Finally this sister's husband died and she was left with seven children to care for. Jean Valjean was in his twenty-fifth year and he assumed the responsibility if a father and assisted his sister in bringing

up the children. The family lived in straightened circumstance because of the poor wages received by Jean Valjean and the large number to be cared for.

During the winter he lost his job and he was unable to find work anywhere. The conditions grew desperate. The familyh had nothing to eat ;and one night Jean Valjean stole a loaf of bread from the bakery. When he was caught he had thrown away the loaf but his hand was still bleeding from the cut of the glass which he had broken to steal the bread. He was tried and sentenced to five years in the galley. A year later he was put in chains with" A great gang of galley slaves at Bicetre. Jean Valjean was seated on the ground like the othes He did not seem to comprehend his position, except that it was horrible.*** While the bolt of his iron collar was being rivet -ed behind his head with heavy blows from the hammer, he wept, his tears stifled him, they impeded his speech; he only manage -ed to say from time to time " I was a tree-pruner at Faverolk -es".

" He set out for Toulon. He arrived there after a journey of twenty seven days,on a cart, with a chain on his neck. All that had constituted his life,even to his name,was effaced;he was no longer even Jean Valjean; he was number 24,601."

Towards the end of the fourth year he escaped but was captured and sentenced to three additional years. A second attempt cost him an additional five years and two successive attempts which met with failure lengthened his imprisonment to

nineteen years.

These years had not been without some meditation.He counted himsef a wronged man. Society had crushed and robbed him. When he was set free he felt that he had not received what belonged to him for his work. Then he found employment and had only been working a short time when a gendarme passing demanded his passport which he had to show and immediately h he was discharged . Instead of receiving Thirty sous,the regular wage he only received fifteen and when he demanded more he was threatened with arrest.

Jean Valjean now set out on his journey. He applied at inns for lodging and food. Everywhere he was received but as soon as they discovered who he was he was driven away and this was always before he had received any food or rest.

Then he applied at a private home and the man of the house threatened to shoot him. He found his way to a box and was driven out by the dogs.

In this condition Jean Valjean had become despondent. He hated society and had reasons for so doing. His whole nature rose in revolt. He became impassive. Societies lack of feeling and the prison experience had dried every part of his being" On his departure from the galleys it had been nineteen years since he had shed a tear"

In this condition he was directed to the door of the good Bishop. We have seen the response to his appeal and the

Bishop's attitude even after he had stolen the candle-sticks.

Confused and dazed by this treatment he staggered out into the street,knowing not whither he was going. It was like the lightning's flash in the darkness of the midnight hour. He was stunned and blinded by the new light of this revelation.

A great battle now raged within his soul. He sat down by the roadside and became deeply engressed in thought. A child came past him playing with some moneyand one piece of forty sou's rolled toward Jean Valjean who put his foot on it. The efforts of the child to arouse him were of no avail. But when the meditation was ended Jean Valjean knew what he had done and tri ed to find the little Gervais but could not.Then in the deepest agony he cried out " I am a wretch". Then his hea heart burst and he began to cry. It was the first time he had wept in nineteen years. "

"He knew that a struggle, a colossal and final struggle had begun between his viciousness and the goodness of that man.;that if he were not henceforth the best of men, he would be the worst:that it behooved him now,so to speak to mount higher than the Bishop,or fall lower than the convict;that if he wished to become good he must become an angel;that if he wished to remain evil, he must become a monster."

"The struggle became more and more intense. He saw himself -he saw the Bishop,the contrasted the two characters Nothing less than the first was required to soften the second. By one

of those singular effects, which are peculiar to this sort of ecstacies ,in proportion as his revery continued, as the Bishop grew great in his eyes,so did Jaen Valjean grow less and vanish. After a certain time he was no longer anything more than a shade. All at once he disappeared. The Bishop alone remained, he filled the whole soul of this wretched man with a magnificient radiance."

And now he wept like a child. Then came the past and all its increasing hideousness. As he saw more clearly. "In the meantime a gentle light rested over this life and this soul. It seemed that he had beheld satan by the light of Paradise. No one knew how long this continued but in the morning hour a man"saw as he traversed the street in which the Bishop's residence was situated. a man in the attitude of prayer,kneeling on the pavement in the shadow, in front of the door of Monseig-neur Welcome". And the first epoch in the life of Jean Valjean had closed and a new one had dawned. The first epoch was black with horror, cruelty,suffering,injustice,brutality and inhumanity.But it cleared with the ray of sunlight from heaven that penetrated the dense darkness of this human soul and made the new epoch dawn with a radiant morn.

The meaasage of the Bishop was one of compassion. Other's had seen nothing but a heartless galley slave. He saw a human being that had been all but robbed by society of its moral possibilities. The good Bishop, the redeemer of this fallen

redeems through the medium of compassion and love.Jean Valjean the redeemed was unable to withstand so great a law as the law of love. And this Hugo would have us understand is the only plan by which the world can be redeemed and the only one which men cannot resist.

The next view we have of JeanValjean is as Father Madelin who has become a large manufacturer. He then became the mayor of the town. In the discussion of Fantine we saw something of the work that he had attempted.

It was after the death of Fantine that the real test of his life came. And it was his greatest temptation.He was still a fugitive from the law but he did not feel that it was a just law and infact he had served more time than he should have. A man was arrested as Jean Valjean and had been convicted as such.

The mayor heard of it through the apology of Javert and that individuals demand to be dismissed because he had reporte the mayor to be Jean Valjean.

The temptation came to Jean Valjean to let the man be sent to prison and he himself remain in his honored position. He found much argument for this. There was Fantine and his promise to her concerning Cosette. Then he was doing a great and philanthropic work, and it would all be forsaken. Then why should he exchange his heaven for a hell?

It is the same old struggle of the individual throwing off the false and revealing the real. It was the question of

whether he would allow another to suffer while he himself was at ease. In his room behind bolted doors he destroyed every particle of evidence that he had kept of the period when he was Jean Valjean to the world.

But conscience would not cease its lashing. It cried out against this horrible crime. And Jean Valjean then did as brave an act as any would dare to do; he left his exalted position and went to the court room and proclaimed himself Jean Valjean. And the supreme satisfaction that came to him for this heroic act is seen in the closing words to the people in the court room. ' When I think of what I was on the point of doing, I consider that I am to be envied."

The officers were so astounded that they made no effort to arrest him and he returned to the death bed of Fantine.

He knew that society had wronged him in his imprisonment of nineteen years. The crime and the punishment were not balanced. When later on Javert arrested him and put him in prison he did not hesitate to break out of prison and gain his freedom. And the purpose for which he sought his liberty was as noble as the man himself.

After escaping he went to the home of the Thernadiers and found Cosette. From the first moment he met her in the road carrying a bucket of water until the close of his life he lived to serve her and right the wrong that had been done her mother .

The story of his devotion to her as they went from place to place, always living in seclusion to evade the law and the terrible Javert, who hounded him like a shadow all through his life and the suffering he endured for her sake reveal the beauty and strength of his character. For love alone in its highest and purest state can explain such devotion as his.

Not only was he willing to serve those he loved but when an opportunity came to serve one who had deeply wronged him there was no malice or revengeful spirit but he served with the same devotion as he did Cosette.

In the closing days of his life he suffered greatly because of the estrangement of cosette and Marius from him. But finally they discovered that he had committed no wrong and they quickly sought his lodging quarters where they found him in his last illness. Here he died in all the glory of a life that had been lived in service.

The gulf that separates the life of Jean Valjean as the thief and the galley slave, and the saint that passed away is a wide one. The difference seems a tremenduous one. But in the thought of Hugo the life that is awakened and nourished by the sunlight of the Infinite love is bound to no limitations. The true greatness of that soul is assured.

Our study is at an end. Modern fiction as represented by these authors is intensely ethical. They show sin in all of its hideousness: they reveal its blighting and deadening

influence; they disclose its terrible power over the individual and society. They preached the gospel of compassion and love; and that the real joy of life is in the quality of service rendered to God and to man. They are the prophets of a better age . An age in which the mind of Christ Jesus will be in the minds of the world and the ruling mind of all men.

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